

VZCZCXYZ0002
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLC #0109 0771205
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 181205Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0996
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0469
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 1528
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 1083
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0991

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 000109

NOFORN
SIPDIS

AF/C PLEASE PASS MALABO AND BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/2019
TAGS: PREL PINR GB
SUBJECT: GABON STEPS UP SECURITY IN RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL THREAT

REF: A. STATE 20357
1B. LIBREVILLE 0104

Classified By: DCM Nathan Holt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) The Gabonese Ministry of Defense issued a communique March 16 stating that it was stepping up patrols in Libreville and cities in the interior of Gabon in response to "corroborated information" about a potential attack by an "identified armed group." A translation of the communique follows in paragraph 5.

12. (U) The warning coincides with the death of First Lady Edith Lucie Bongo Ondimba, who is both the wife of Gabon's President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba and the daughter of Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. Both presidents were expected to arrive in Libreville March 18, along with the body of Mrs. Bongo. The Gabonese first lady died in Rabat, Morocco March 13 after a long illness (Ref. A).

13. (S/NF) Post initially observed an increase in security measures in the days before Mrs. Bongo's death. On March 5, Post provided appropriate Gabonese authorities with sensitive tearline information about potential planning for an attack by Niger Delta militants (Ref. B). The Gabonese expressed keen interest and said they would follow up with other sources, presumably including the French--with whom Gabon has a close intel relationship. We do not know what other information may be available to the Gabonese. In previous instances where we shared similar information, Gabonese authorities stepped up maritime patrols and implemented other security measures. This is, however, the first time such measures have been publicly acknowledged or connected to an external armed group.

14. (C) More generally, Gabonese authorities have expressed growing concern about what they see as increasing insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. The February 2009 attack on Malabo, mentioned in the communique, has been a source of particular concern.

15. (U) Translated text of the communique follows:

Begin Text

For some time now, acts of violence have been perpetrated in the countries of the sub-region by an identified armed group. Corroborated information has pointed to the preparation of an attack against our country, following that against the sister republic of Equatorial Guinea a few days ago.

In order to prevent all kinds of threats capable of injuring

the security of persons and things, mobile and fixed military patrols have been deployed through the city of Libreville and cities in the interior of the country, in order to verify the identity of persons and vehicles.

The Defense Forces dedicated to this mission have received instructions to accomplish this mission, while at the same time they have received an order to carry out this operation with courtesy and discipline, with strict respect for the freedom of circulation of the population.

End Text
REDDICK